



The President's Daily Brief

Top Secret 29 December 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
29 DECEMBER 1967

1. Cambodia

Sihanouk has been quoted by the Washington Post as saying he would "not intervene" if US troops entered Cambodia in hot pursuit of Vietnamese Communists--at least under certain conditions. One of these conditions was that he be convinced that the Vietnamese had entered Cambodia illegally, and in an uninhabited region. He insisted that Cambodian troops would resist any attacks on areas where Vietnamese had been living for a long time, as well as any "incursion" by South Vietnamese troops.

Sihanouk is said to have added that, although he would not invite any US officials to come for talks, he would "gladly receive" a personal envoy from President Johnson.

All this would be a major flip-flop even for Sihanouk, and we have no confirmation that he has in fact changed his standard position, reaffirmed as recently as two days ago, that there are no Viet Cong in Cambodia and Cambodia would fight to the last man if South Vietnam or the US invaded.

2. Laos

Small-scale skirmishing is continuing in the southern part of the country. There is still no indication, however, that a major Communist offensive is under way.

3. Hong Kong

Peking, concerned for some time over the use of violence in Hong Kong, probably hopes toning things down will encourage other dissatisfied, but non-Communist, groups to join in the "confrontation." Local Communist leaders will probably try to carry out Peking's directive, but may have trouble rein-ing in their bomb-throwers.

4. Nigeria

The federal government plans to announce on Saturday that all Nigerian currency will be replaced sometime next month. Biafra will now have to try to sell its fairly sizable holdings of Nigerian pounds in a hurry, and probably at a steep discount. Up to now, gradual selling of these holdings has been Biafra's chief source of funds for the civil war--which is still dragging along.

5. Rumania

Moscow is said to have "broken" a contract to purchase oil drilling equipment from Bucharest, and to be pressuring Prague to cancel a large order for Rumanian-made railroad cars. This probably stems from Soviet irritation over Rumania's "independent" stand on important international issues, and more such economic reprisals may be in the offing.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Comments on President's Meeting with Thieu:
Hanoi radio's domestic service has broadcast a Nhan Dan commentary of last Sunday on Thieu's meeting with President Johnson. Referring to the joint communiqué, Nhan Dan says, "acting on the orders of his US masters, traitor Thieu shamelessly raved about his national union policy." The article goes on to ridicule President Johnson's five-point peace proposal and to assert that the Americans themselves have given the lie to the "cheap, deceitful peace arguments" through "a series of recent aggressive actions." Included among these "aggressive actions," according to the article, is the "urgent airlift" of more US troops last week.

Hanoi's international service summarized a similar Nhan Dan editorial of the next day. The US Embassy in Saigon comments that Hanoi's practice of tying conciliatory statements by the US with alleged new US acts of escalation has become a standard way for Hanoi to reject allied peace initiatives.

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Red River Crossings: Photography of 15 December shows three causeway-pontoon bridges in place or under construction across the Red River just north and south of the recently bombed Paul Doumer Bridge. The causeways run out from the banks and are constructed of rock and gravel laid across exposed sand bars. Pontoon sections are added where necessary to complete the crossings. One causeway-pontoon bridge, located about three-quarters of a mile northwest of the Doumer bridge, is under construction. Two others, about a mile and a half south of the Doumer bridge, are operational. The new Red River crossings are believed capable of supporting a moderate level of truck traffic. The causeways should be serviceable for several months until undermined and washed out when the present seasonally low water in the Red River returns to normal about June. There are twelve

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other alternate crossing facilities along the Red River, half of them within five miles of the Doumer bridge.

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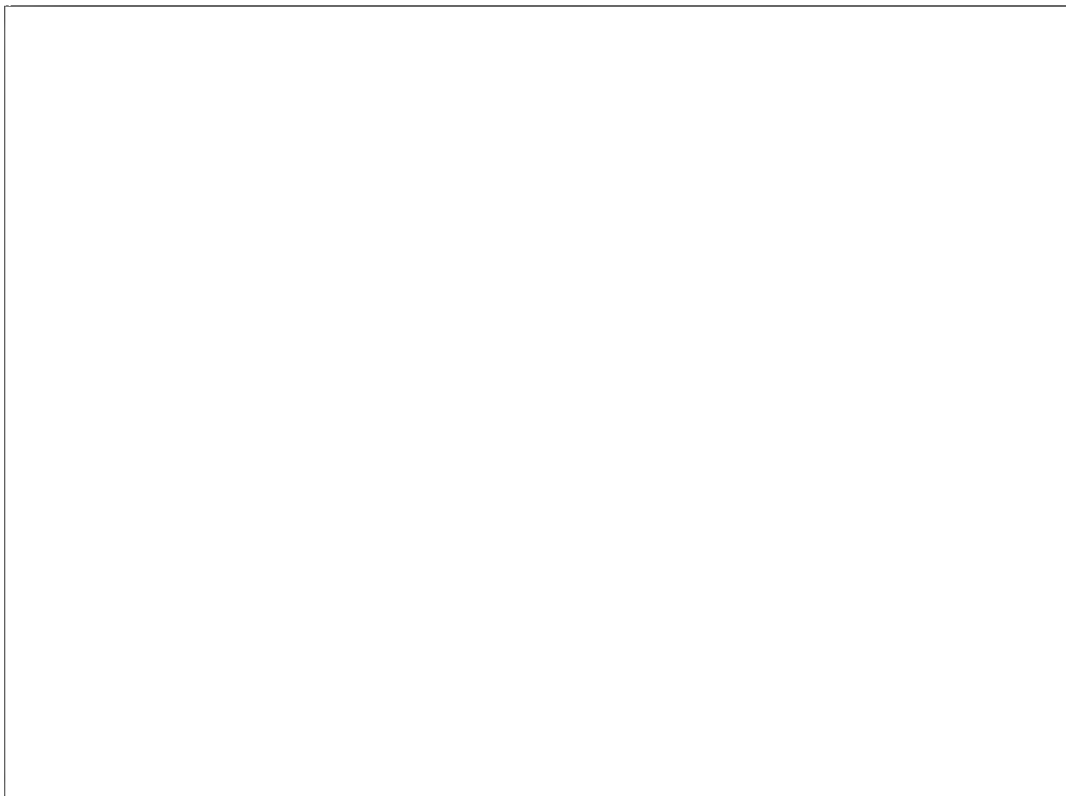
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Heavy Traffic in Hanoi Area During Christmas Truce: [redacted] in Hanoi during the 24-hour Christmas truce observed heavy traffic on all roads in the Hanoi area and compared it with similar high volumes of traffic which have occurred during periods when inclement weather prevented US air activity. [redacted] observed traffic crossing into Hanoi over what appeared to be two pontoon or boat-borne bridges (apparently the causeway-pontoon bridges referred to in the previous item). The recently bombed Paul Doumer Bridge was in almost complete darkness. Heavy traffic was also observed on highways leading into Hanoi from all directions.

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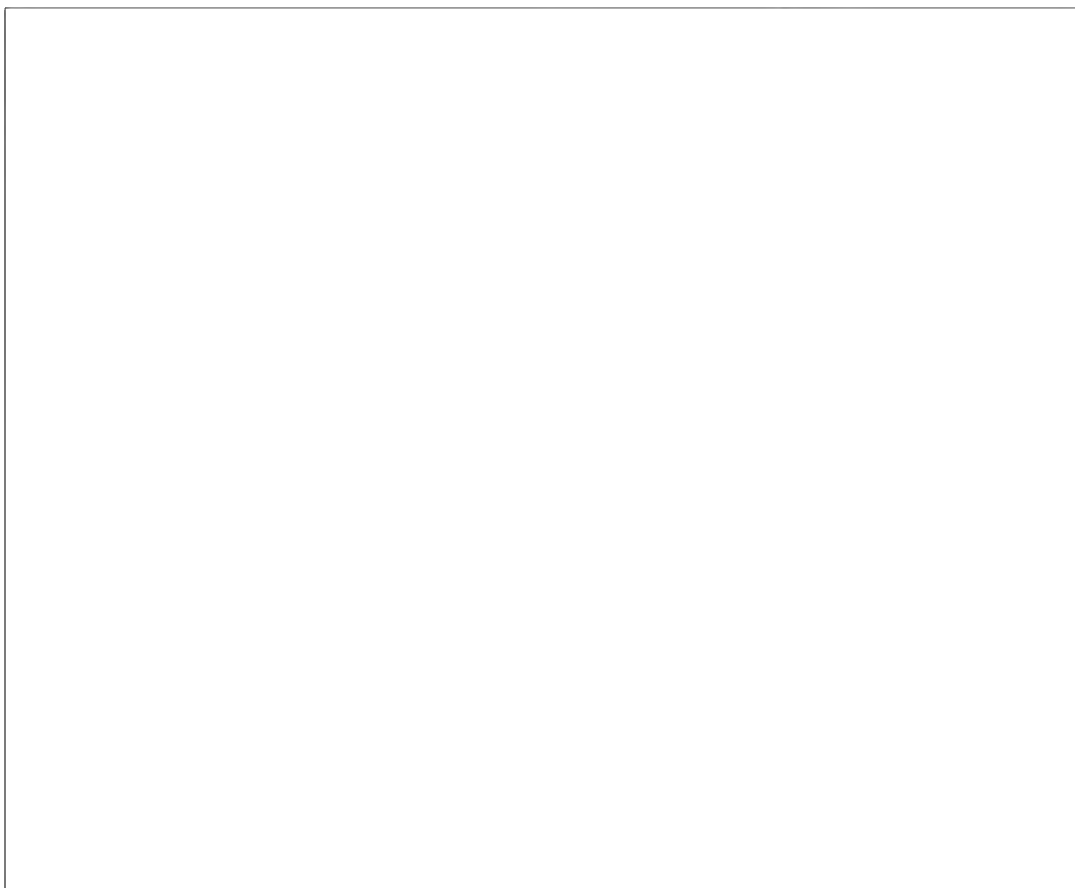
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Hanoi Sends More Students to Europe: Despite demands on manpower reserves at home, Hanoi is continuing to send large groups of people to bloc countries for training. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] . Information on previous groups has indicated that many are being trained in industrial and technical skills which would be necessary in the postwar rebuilding of the North Vietnamese economy.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

The Front's Christmas Message to the American People: The Liberation Front's radio on 24 December broadcast the text of a Christmas letter from the Front's "Committee for Solidarity with the American People" to the American people. The letter contrasted the happiness of Christmas time in the US with the misery experienced by many Vietnamese--especially children. It praised those American people who openly protest the war and claimed that the coming new year will be marked by an unprecedented development of the antiwar movement. The movement, the Front message went on, will demand that the US Government respect the American people's wishes, put an end to the war, and repatriate all US troops.

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Hanoi Reports Antiwar Protest in Texas: Hanoi in an English language broadcast yesterday reported without comment a recent antiwar protest in Texas. Quoting Western news sources, the broadcast stated that 55 members of the Austin "Committee to End the Vietnam War" held a one-hour Christmas day vigil outside the President's ranch "to protest against the US war of aggression in Vietnam."

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